



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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CONTACT: Pamela Bartholomew, Agritourism Coordinator
615-837-5160

Pamela.Bartholomew@TN.gov

AUG. 5-7 FARM SAFETY WORKSHOPS AIM TO PROTECT FARM VISITORS, FARMERS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Three workshops addressing farm safety issues for agritourism operators are scheduled at locations across the state Aug. 5-7. Workshops will be conducted August 5 in Jackson at the UT Agricultural Experiment Station; Aug. 6 in Nashville at the Ellington Agricultural Center Ed Jones Auditorium; and Aug. 7 in Morristown at the Walters State Community College Ag Pavilion. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the workshop begins at 9 a.m. at each location.

“Farmers know from a lifetime of experience the importance of personal safety on the farm; however, preparing for visitors and ensuring their safety is a whole different ballgame and requires careful planning, and there are many things to consider,” says Pamela Bartholomew, agritourism coordinator with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

For farmers who have made the decision to invite the non-farm public to their farms, learning how to keep visitors safe from hazards is crucial for both farmers and farm visitors.

“Of course, every agritourism operator is already thinking of every way possible to make a customer’s experience safe and happy,” says Bartholomew, “so that the customers don’t have to think about it. But what if a medical emergency or other crisis occurs while visitors are enjoying time on the farm? This workshop will give farmers the understanding and skills they need to do the best thing possible in such a situation, as quickly as possible.”

Agritourism is defined as any activity or event that involves inviting the public onto a farm for activities or farm products, according to Bartholomew. The upcoming workshops are specifically geared to teach participants how to improve safety in an agritourism operation and to properly handle health emergencies. Bernard Geschke, with the Progressive Farmer Farm Safety for Kids program, is on the agenda to show producers how to implement proper safety techniques, safety checks, and develop safety

ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER
BOX 40627, NASHVILLE, TN 37204
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plans for their farms. Bernard travels across the United States presenting and promoting farm safety.

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Participating agritourism operators will also be trained on recommended responses to a variety of health emergencies. Each workshop participant will be trained by the American Red Cross to handle emergency situations. The training will include an overview of first aid, and will culminate with certification in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and AED (automated external defibrillator) use.

Another benefit of the safety workshop, says Bartholomew, is that participants will then be eligible for a 50 percent cost share reimbursement for approved agritourism projects through the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program. The cost share program is part of a comprehensive initiative to build farm income, including agritourism operations. Without workshop participation, agritourism operators would be eligible to receive a 35 percent cost share reimbursement on an approved project.

To register for a workshop, call 615-837-5106. For more information, call or e-mail Bartholomew at 615-837-5348 or Pamela.Bartholomew@TN.gov.

“It’s the farmer’s responsibility to protect visitors to the farm,” says Bartholomew. “By ensuring a safe environment for your customers, you also ensure the profitability and the future of your agritourism operation. Attend one of these three regional workshops to protect your customers and yourself!”

Visit www.picktnproducts.org for more information about Tennessee agritourism, TAEP opportunities and to find Tennessee grown or processed foods.

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